



DRAFT

**FAMILIES AND EDUCATION LEVY
LEVY OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**
Tuesday, February 28, 2006 • 1:00–3:00 p.m.
Madison Middle School



MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: Cheryl Chow, Frances Contreras, Councilmember David Della, Marie Kurose.

OTHERS PRESENT: Tunde Akunyan (Aki Kurose Middle School), Tom Bailey (Middle School Support Consultant), Carla Bryant (OFE), Bi Hoa Caldwell (Principal, Aki Kurose Middle School), Lin Carlson (representing Superintendent Raj Manhas, Seattle Public Schools), Jeff Clark (Principal, Denny Middle School), Jessica de Barros (Office for Education), Donnie Grabowski (OFE), Jolene Grimes (Madison Middle School Success Coordinator), Aimee Hirabayashi (Middle School Support consultant), Jill Hudson (Principal, Madison Middle School), Patricia Lee (City Council), Andhra Lutz (Principal, Mercer Middle School), Don McGinnis (Aki Kurose Middle School), Ruth Medsker (Middle School Director), Holly Miller (OFE), Chanda Oatis (Denny Middle School Principal Intern/Teacher), Chrissy Parker (Aki Kurose Community Learning Center), Liezl Tomas Rebugio (HSD), Sid Sidorowicz (OFE), Anne Shields (Public Health), Kristi Skanderup (Middle School Support Consultant), Lisa Taylor (Seattle Public Schools).

Councilmember David Della called the meeting to order. He asked LOC members to review the minutes from the January 17, 2006 meeting. Cheryl Chow asked for the deletion of the sentence on the first page, regarding the DIAL-3 kindergarten readiness assessment, "H. Miller explained that after significant training and lead time, teachers balked at applying the assessment." C. Chow stated that was a correct account of what was said at the LOC meeting, but she felt it was not accurate in that it did not explain the background issues that caused the teachers not to administer the assessment (e.g., the assessment needed to be administered in 5 different stations within a classroom, no plans for substitute teachers, etc.). Holly Miller suggested adding the background information including the logistical difficulties to the minutes. The LOC approved the minutes with this addition.

H. Miller introduced Aimee Hirabayashi, Tom Bailey and Kristi Skanderup, the consultants who are coordinating Middle School Innovation Sites, Linkage Sites and Success Coordinators. They are an amazing team of people.

A. Hirabayashi described the Middle School work, emphasizing how focused teams are on standards. The challenge is to work as a quality team to implement best practices in order to prevent dropouts. This work must be done as part of a team that is very focused on student performance. Teams must do this, not simply talk about it. The Innovation and Linkage Site work supports the vision of OFE, which is student-focused rather than adult-focused.

Next, each principal described their respective Innovation Sites.

Denny Middle School

Jeff Clark reported on Denny Middle School. He believes middle school is the most critical time for students to learn, and for this reason being principal of Denny is his “dream job.” Denny recently revised its master schedule mid-semester to offer more intensive classes to students based on performance data. He made the decision to change the schedule mid-semester rather than waiting until next year, because there is no time to waste. The team looked at student achievement data to determine what individual children need, created classroom and out-of-school time offerings, and then individually assigned students to the offerings based on needs. A point-person is assigned to each student. Middle School support has created a system of student learning where everyone is involved – parents, teachers, etc. Chanda Oatis, a teacher and Principal Intern at Denny, described one of the new mid-semester course offerings specifically for African American males and females (the classes are gender-specific).

Mercer Middle School

Andhra Lutz presented on the Mercer Middle School Innovation Site. This investment has made a tremendous difference. Mercer is using the funds for extended learning time and individualization. The team collects all of the student data and keeps it throughout the year. One new program is a WASL tutoring program for 6th and 7th grade students. Through this program, kids and teachers build relationships in addition to improving academic performance. Over spring break, the school will hold a WASL Camp, leveraging GEAR UP funds. The school is currently recruiting 114 students who are currently at level 1 on the WASL. Mercer is also trying computer-based interventions and a Saturday math madness, serving 12 kids for 5 weeks. In the future, the school will continue to use extended learning time in order to improve academic performance.

Aki Kurose Middle School

Bi Hoa Caldwell presented on the Innovation Site at Aki Kurose Middle School. The school is making connections with students, particularly through the Community Learning Center and partnership with the Meredith Matthews YMCA. Aki Kurose also partners with Pioneer Human Services to provide mental health services to students. Approximately 72.5% of students at Aki Kurose receive free and reduced-price lunch; the poverty rate is relatively high. Part of the job is to get students to realize a reason for learning despite adversity. B. Caldwell introduced Don McGinnis, Tunde Akunyan and Chrissy Parker to speak about the Innovation Site. While student learning plans were started a bit late this year, teachers are sharing the plans and they are “living documents” teams make revisions to as needed. The school has started a family and student mentoring program called Aki Experts, as well.

Linkage Sites

Ruth Medsker, Director of Middle Schools, presented on the Linkage Site schools. Linkage Sites are in middle schools that are not Innovation Sites. The new Middle School Support approach has helped school staff be more intentional about identifying specific students for help, sharing best practices among schools, analyzing what is working and not working, and keeping track of individual student learning through student learning plans. Lin Carlson has taken the lead on analyzing discipline data, and has found the Innovation Sites reduced the number of suspensions in every student category, relative to the other middle schools.

Madison Middle School

Jill Hudson spoke on Madison Middle School's Innovation Site. Many students are disconnected and don't have opportunities, and this program provides those opportunities. If we believe all students can meet standards, some will take more time than others and it is up to the school to provide that time. Jolene Grimes, the School Success Coordinator, described the School Success Program, which includes before-school, during school and after-school activities focused on academic achievement. She described how the programs were using data to set numeric targets. J. Hudson introduced two students who described their experiences in the after-school activities.

Anne Shields asked whether there was a waiting list for after-school activities. There is a waiting list since only one Homework Club class is currently offered. The school is beginning to take into account out-of-school time skills when hiring teachers in order to build more capacity.

D. Della opened up discussion on the Innovation Sites. Staff from Aki Kurose asked J. Clark from Denny to elaborate on the point-person assigned to each student. Denny used this strategy to make student learning plans relevant and to divide up the time needed to monitor the plans.

Marie Kurose asked how schools blend disciplinary issues with academic support. J. Hudson from Madison responded schools are working on relationship-building and cultural competence. They resist jumping to suspensions as a punishment, especially for disruptive conduct. J. Clark added schools need to connect to families and foster participation.

Frances Contreras asked about teacher participation in extended learning time and whether incentives were used. A. Lutz from Mercer uses financial incentives and allows flex schedules to teachers in order for them to be able to teach after-school.

Lin Carlson remarked it is exciting to hear we've actualized the intent to link student learning and Middle School Support. A School Board policy makes it possible to offer free rent to out-of-school time providers that are aligned with learning standards. He introduced Lisa Taylor, the District's School Services staff.

D. Della stated the principals have done a great job creating the Innovation Sites, and asked how staff align their work to facilitate changes. J. Clark responded schools need to analyze data to determine where students are and what they need to learn. J. Hudson added Madison is using OSPI's School Improvement Process, and the Success Coordinator provides regular updates to staff based on student performance. School staff also need to be very open to trying new strategies and stopping strategies that are not working.

D. Della asked what extended learning time means for a student. J. Hudson stated students must have a relationship with an adult to get them to sign up. In addition, the parents need to support extended learning. J. Clark added it is important to involve students in planning.

H. Miller congratulated all of the principals and staff on the Innovation Site work so far.

The meeting was adjourned.